

How Old is Man?

We find there has been so many estimates as to the age of man upon the earth. There are those who rely upon the Bible for all their information, and there are scientists who build upon theories, and make calculations from the resources that a real or supposed science has opened up to them. The estimated age of man upon this world varies from 800,000 years, the most radical reckoning of the wildest calculation of the scientist down to the 5,900 years of Archbishop Usher, which he devoutly claims was obtained from the chronology of the Bible. By the common consent of scientific opinion, the origin of man is now placed at the beginning of the present period—the post-glacial epoch. By this is meant the period when the earth was melted out of its solid icy condition, and took the form in which we now behold it. When was this glacial period? Farel, the French geologist, places it at 100,000 years ago. There are but very few, if any, that agree with him. Marlot, another Frenchman, gives his estimate that this period was ushered in from 16,000 to 27,000 years ago. Then again Arcelin, another French scientist, claims it could not have commenced under 12,500 years back.

The time of the present glacial period is variously calculated from glacial action, from lake excavations, if they were excavation, from moss and silt deposits and especially from the accumulations deposited in different rivers. But the most popular dates is from 22,000 years maximum to 12,000 minimum, and this has the concurrence of most geologists of today. While nearly all the scientists differ among themselves, on one thing they are agreed, that Archbishop Usher's chronology is not worth any serious attention. That chronology places the creation of man at 4,004 B. C. making the time to the present, allowing for 3 years error in our christian chronology, 5,896 years.

When we look at all the events as recorded in the Bible, that have taken place commencing at the creation, down to the flood, the repopulation of the world, and the gradual advancement, until they culminated in the development of such nations as Babylon, Assyria, Chaldea, Egypt, Greece, Rome and others, we cannot help but believe it must have taken a longer time than that given us in the margins of our Bibles. These great nations loom up before us without notice in the very zenith of power. We must remember that nations in those early days did not develop in a century or two, as our own nation did. Progress was slow, very slow. In the state of semi-barbarism as they were, it must have taken many thousand years for them to arrive at the state of developed power that we find Babylon in its greatest strength, and Assyria in the days of Elisha. To allow only forty centuries from the creation of Christ.

To concede that from the creation to the deluge was less than 1700 years and that such powerful nations as the Babylonians, the Chaldeans, the Assyrians should develop and mature to their great strength in such a short time, seems almost unrea-

sonable. Is it not a fact that we crowd so many important events into such a short space of time that has caused some good thinking men to doubt? We trust the time has not yet come that our orthodoxy or confidence in the Bible will be questioned just because we fail to accept Bishop Usher's computation.

The Bible is not a geological or chronological work. Though it affords us some glimpses, it gives no dates as to the processes and periods of creation and the incoming of man. Surely no service is done the Bible by attempting to fasten the Usher chronology upon the mind of today.

Let us go back to the creation. God has written two books—nature and the Bible. If they are the work of God they should perfectly agree. So let us remember that the two Bibles—nature and scripture—cannot contradict each other. The interpretation of both is alike human and liable to error. When we find the first verse of revelation assert, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,' how do we know how many centuries or decades of centuries 'in the beginning' means? Then while it is true that we read a few verses further on that 'God called the light Day and the darkness Night, and the evening and the morning were the first day.' Conant says, 'And there was evening, and there was morning, one day.' Murphy renders it, 'Then was evening, then was morning, day one.' Now the question is, how long was that day? There are some Christian scientists who claim that the six days of creation were of a thousand years duration each. There is only one point upon which all scientific men agree, and that is that each day or period of creation was not of twenty-four hours, but of several centuries duration.

It is much to be regretted that it is considered necessary by many good people that the maintenance of the authority of the Scriptures requires the acceptance of Usher's Chronology. Those who may differ from the Archbishop have this consolation that his Chronology is not inspired and that the Bible is not a manual of geology or ethnology. The Bible merely discloses the mind of God as to the duties God requires of man. Then if we accept the scriptures in this light, and we obey its commands to the best of our ability, the teachings, the discoveries, and it may as well be said, the mistakes of science may all be left to that time which tests all ambiguities, sifts errors, and establishes the truth.

EDWARD MASON.

Notes.

It is said that thirty thousand people go to bed drunk in Glasgow every Saturday night.

Prohibition Kansas has one penitentiary with 996 inmates. License Texas has 100,000 less population and two penitentiaries with 3,000 inmates.

The Presbyterian General Assembly, May 27th, declared in favor of prohibition by a vote of 193 to 82. This action was understood to be no indorsement of any political party.

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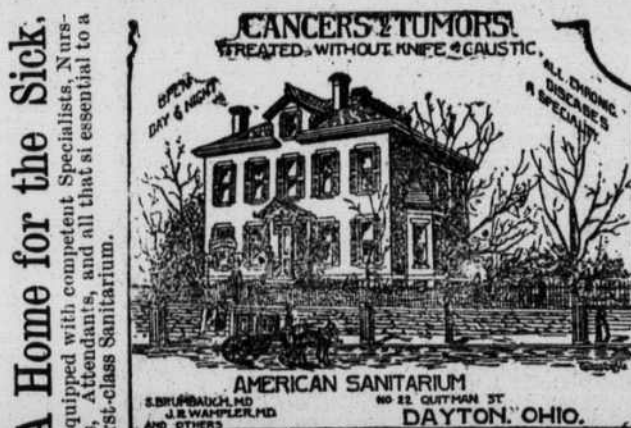
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